

A Uniting Europe, a Dividing Education? Euro-centrism and the Curriculum

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ABSTRACT The European Union's activities constitute a relatively new influence on educational policy-making. It has generally been argued that this influence is both weak and politically progressive. It is purported to be 'weak' because Member States are supposed to jealously guard the autonomy of their national education systems. In addition, it is argued that the key concern of Brussels remains vocational training, despite the specific reference to general education in the Treaty of Maastricht. It is considered to be a 'progressive' influence because the so-called European dimension in education sets out to foster 'European' values such as democracy, respect for human rights, pluralism, multiculturalism and respect for ethnic minorities. This paper will explore these generally held assumptions and will argue that the EU's influence in the field of education is much greater than normally acknowledged, that this influence is exerted through a variety of mechanisms, and that the current construction of 'European education' signals contradictory messages through its agenda for 'unity in diversity'. More specifically, this paper will analyse the way in which the EU has set out to facilitate and promote a strong 'European identity' through the medium of education. Initiatives and policies in Member States setting out to Europeanise their curricula are interrogated in terms of their manifest and latent meanings and value systems, and the extent to which 'learning *for* and *about* Europe' – i.e. identity through *difference* – entails processes of exclusion and distancing of the non-European. It is argued that educators, as cultural intellectuals, must refuse to accept the politics of identity as given, but must rather critically examine how representations of Europe and Europeans are constructed, for what purpose, by whom, and with what components.

Introduction

The key aim of this paper is to make a case for the recognition of the European Union as an influential supranational actor in the field of education. I believe that this is a case worth making for a number of reasons.

To start with, the EU's desire to promote 'unity in diversity' in the economic, social, political and cultural fields has obvious implications for the general theme addressed in this volume, and connects with (without of course resolving) the tension underlying the concept 'pluralism', namely the desire to reconcile autonomy with solidarity. It also connects with the idea that pluralism, among a number of other values in this post-industrial, post-modern, global society, can be promoted by curricular changes, such as when the EU encourages schools to develop a European dimension in and across various subjects. But it is also worth highlighting the influence of the European Union in education for other reasons as well. As sociologists we should be focusing on how the production (Petitat, 1982) and reproduction (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977, 1990) of contemporary society is carried out through education and formal schooling. Over the past three decades we have focused on how such processes of production and reproduction respond to specific vested interests of groups in society, and how such processes are mediated via the State so that particular forms of knowledge and pedagogy are legitimated and promulgated. My argument is that while these studies, often looking as they do inwardly, at the national level of policy-making, are still necessary and useful, economic, political and socio-cultural changes world-wide require us to look more closely at supra-national entities to critically explore the immediate and future implications of such changes for the field of education. With reference to the 'old' continent, a supra-national entity that is taking shape is the European Union.

This focus is even more crucial because it seems to have attracted very little serious study among us. In my attempt to respond to my country's application for membership of the EU, I have been engaged, over the past three years, in an analysis of precisely this project. In trying to answer such questions as: What is the EU's agenda for education? In whose interests does this agenda work? How does it go about asserting that agenda? I have perused most of the major, refereed education journals that have been produced over the past ten years in English, French and Italian, and it is surprising that we find very little in terms of answers to the questions that I have raised. Let me add that we find little both in terms of quantity and quality. There are fewer than a hundred articles in all which have been published in refereed journals and which engage the theme of education and the European Union (Novoa, 1994; Sultana, 1994, 1995), and the great majority of these are bland comparative pieces, shorn of sociological imagination, highlighting similarities and differences in the education systems of the member states. This is also true of the spate of books on the subject that have appeared recently (among others see: Bolis, 1988; Vaniscotte, 1989a,b; Bouchez & Peretti, 1990; McLean, 1990; Di Francia & Luggeri, 1991; Giordani, 1991; Andrieu, 1992). In addition, most of the literature that addresses the subject has been marked by an uncritical acceptance of the goals and processes of European unification, and an approbation of the presumed implications of these for educational practice (Vaniscotte, 1989a,b; Hansen, 1991; Lowe, 1992;

Andrieu, 1992; Peck, 1992; Funnell & Muller, 1991, are just a few examples of the kind of uncritical writing I am referring to here). There is often an "undiscriminating appropriation of Brussels discourse" (Novoa, 1994), while reference to education in the context of the EU debate is shaped by a pro-European rhetoric "impregnated and determined by an eschatological view of Europe" (Pereyra, 1993, p. 12). This eschatological rhetoric is, indeed, a characteristic of much of the discourse that marks the writing about Europe in many other disciplines and fields (Wilterdink, 1993), as references are made to 'culture' and 'history' in the description of an essential 'European identity'.[1]

In this paper I will therefore attempt to address the lacunae that I have identified, by:

1. Exploring the role of the EU as a supranational actor.
2. Articulating the EU's general agenda, and focusing specifically on the linkages between this and education.
3. Identifying the formal and informal mechanisms by means of which the EU exerts its influence and promotes its agenda in education.
4. Drawing connections between these general investigations and the theme specific to this volume, namely by analysing the implications of the EU's attempts to promote a strong internal identity through curricular interventions which teach 'for and about Europe'.

My argument will be that – and I am here paraphrasing Said (1993, p. 380) – educators, as cultural intellectuals, must refuse to accept the politics of identity as given, but must rather critically examine how representations of Europe and Europeans are constructed, for what purpose, by whom and with what components.

The EU as a Supranational Actor

Despite the fact that the EU has no direct state capability, it is nevertheless an important social actor in a number of fields, including not only economics, finance and politics, but social policy (Leibfried, 1993; Manning, 1993), policy making (Majone, 1994) and education (Sultana, 1994, 1995) as well. The difficulty in determining the extent of this influence lies partly in the fact that the EU represents a new social form, an entity that is larger than the nation-state, and yet not quite supranational in its executive powers. Some commentators consider that the European Union represents a unique historic opportunity "as the first truly novel state-form in history since the invention of the nation-state", arguing that the concept of 'federalism' affords the possibility of "creatively absorbing the traditional antinomy between union and autonomy, uniformity and diversity, union and non-centralization, independence and interdependence in a way to accommodate both elements" (Miller, 1988, para. 6.3.2., quoted in Heater, 1992, p. 59). In a less

enthusiastic register, others point out the amorphous nature of the EU, and note the difference between the Community's post-Maastricht phase and the original vision for a united Europe embraced by the signatories of the Treaty of Rome in 1957 (Balibar, 1991; Bryant, 1991). Bryant (1991, p. 190) in fact argues that the EU's very contours remain shaped by such a multiplicity of forces that novel social, economic and political forms, some of them hard even to conceptualise, may be expected. This is especially true given the intensification of the unification process in Europe and the trend towards supranationalism. In this regard he concludes that:

... the future of the state, the rights of the citizen, the relation of the state to civil society, and the relations of both the state and the citizen to supranational institutions, are at stake throughout Europe. The common factor is the circumscription of the state. In the EC, the single market is itself generating a shift in the balance of power from member states to community institutions, irrespective of other proposals for European union.

This shift is signalled by the fact that by 1991 over 50% of the 282 directives required to enact the Single Market had been passed by the EU's legislative machinery (Funnell & Muller, 1991, p. 22), and Jacques Delors is quoted predicting that the EU would be responsible for "80% of economic and social legislation" by the late 1990s (Palmer, 1989, p. 8).

We have here, therefore, the makings of a new social form, which needs to be contrasted to national units, those pillars of modern society which arose in the 15th century, and which were upheld by the school, the army and the factory. This is not specific to the newest of "imagined communities" (Anderson, 1982), the European Union. A number of social commentators (Giddens, 1985; Held, 1988; Kennedy, 1989; Haller, 1990; Balibar, 1991; Bryant, 1991; Kurth, 1993; Hindess, 1994) have pointed out the extent to which the post-modern world, while still containing old states, is increasingly becoming re-organised along multinational non-state lines. As Featherstone (1991, p. 146) has argued, "the increased international flows of money, goods, people, images and information have given rise to 'third cultures', which are transnational and mediate between national cultures". The deconstruction of the 'old' modern world and its reconstruction into new forms and new organisations which are not states – the European Community, international organisations, international law, global financial markets, multinational enterprises, and global media – presents new challenges for sociologists as we attempt to illuminate the meaning and significance of processes in a world marked by economic, political and cultural internationalisation.

Let us look more closely at how the supra-national character of the EU is evolving, in order to better understand the kinds of challenges that this might present to educational sociologists.

It must be recognised at the very outset that the EU is premised on the belief that the 'nation state' is no longer functional to general economic interests, and hence the aspiration is to facilitate the free flow of capital,

goods, labour and services through the reduction or removal of physical, technical and fiscal barriers to free trade. As Marquand (1988, p. 212, cited in Bryant, 1991) notes:

The aim is to strengthen the Community's competitiveness in world markets, particularly in the area of high technology where European companies seemed to be losing ground to their Japanese and American competitors, so as to prevent a relative decline in the economic and ultimately political power and influence of Western Europe vis-à-vis Japan and the United States. The assumption is that the chief obstacles to greater competitiveness lies in the barriers to genuinely free competition within Europe, and that the way to reach the goal is to remove those barriers. Free competition internally is assumed to be a necessary (and, in some interpretations, perhaps even a sufficient) condition of competitiveness externally.

In its attempts to meet these new challenges and objectives, the EU has not only encouraged processes of convergence in a number of diverse fields, but has also intensified its control over these very same processes, creating a supranational order that has raised concerns among the likes of Thatcher and, more recently, Major, even though these support the economic liberalism of the single market. As Muller & Wright (1994) note in their analysis of the reshaping of the state in Europe, the pressure for Europeanisation, both at formal and informal levels, has had a remarkable influence on the parameters of state activity not only in the financial and industrial sectors, but also in such sensitive areas as health, education, social welfare and environmental issues, which "in spite of vague promises to respect the principle of subsidiarity", "have been slowly dragged into the regulatory net of Brussels" (p. 6). Muller & Wright (1994, p. 6) conclude:

To an extent which is not fully appreciated, the EU is slowly redefining existing political arrangements, altering traditional policy networks, triggering institutional change, reshaping the opportunity structures of member states and their major interests. These interests are now increasingly entangled in relationships at four territorial levels: the international, the European, the national and the local, and for some of those interests it is by no means clear that the national level is the most important.

Of course, national states are not being wiped out: rather, they are still central actors, remaining for most citizens "a primary source of welfare, order, authority, legitimacy, identity and loyalty" (Muller & Wright, 1994, p. 10). But there is clearly a change, so that while it is possible to counter the thesis that the state is 'retreating', [2] there is much evidence to uphold the hypothesis that what we have in fact is a 'redefinition' rather than a 'rolling back' of European states. These are becoming "increasingly prisoners of an interlocking network of bargained solutions: they are not by-passed or eliminated but rather more constrained. They retain a nodal decision-making position but their action is more indirect, more discreet and bartered" (Muller & Wright, 1994, pp. 7-8). Balibar (1991, p. 16) goes further, using terms like

'decomposition' and 'deficiency' of the nation-state vis-à-vis the Community, "a deficiency in power, in responsibility and in public qualities". "The 'state' in Europe", argues Balibar, "is tending to disappear as a power-centralizing institution, one to which responsibility for policy can be ascribed and which exercises 'public' mediation (in both senses of the term) between social interests and forces".

We need to ask the extent to which this redefinition of the European state has implications for the field of education, and whether new pressures are being – and will be – exerted on the definition of the educational project for the future. This clearly is tantamount to proposing a generative research project that challenges not only the current boundaries of the field of sociology of education, but of policy studies and comparative education analyses as well. In addressing these new research challenges, we need of course to keep in mind that Brussels regulatory strategies are filtered through the different and distinctive "histories, traditions, constitutions, institutions, opportunity structures and tissues of constraints, policy network and styles" (Muller & Wright, 1994, p. 10; Moon, 1990; Ryba, 1992; Sultana, 1994, 1995; Watson, 1994) of each member state. But this awareness of complexity in the ways in which different policy regimes of member states facilitate or filter the EU's activity should not blind us to the overall agenda of the European Union, and to the extent the structural integration of the EU and the growth of pan-European consciousness of European elites will lead to convergence of national policies in different fields, including education.[3] In a later section of this paper I will again pick up the theme of the extent and limits of the EU's influence in education, and the mechanisms by means of which such influence is exerted. However, at this stage, and having made claims about the supranational, policy-making character of the EU, it is important to consider its overall agenda. In other words, in whose interests does this influence work? Who stands to gain and who to lose in this new 'European space' that is currently being delimited?

The EU Agenda

It has already been suggested that as an economic space or bloc, the aspirations of a Single Market which facilitates the free flow of capital, goods, persons and services represents the offensive of a capitalist class in the face of international competition, mainly from North America and the Pacific Rim. Ross (1992, p. 65) has characterised the EU bluntly and powerfully, pointing out that the "struggle over the future of Europe is largely about developing more promising environments for capitalist success", even if the formulation of new options is being most overtly carried out by political rather than economic entrepreneurs. I would like us to retain this characterisation, even though reality is of course more complex and contested than that, and Europe can signify different things to different people. Indeed, as the Danish 'no' to Maastricht showed, ultra-conservative groups can occasionally join forces with

popular left-wing movements to oppose Brussels intervention, often for conflicting reasons (Christiansen, 1992).

There is no doubt at all that the EU's vision is informed by the assumptions of orthodox market economics, which, with the routing of alternative forms of social arrangements to capitalism, are generally accepted as self-evident truths. The removal of administrative, technical and other non-tariff barriers are thought to reduce costs, increase competition, enhance economic activity and deal with stagflation (Ross, 1992, p. 53; Cecchini, 1988). It would be fair to argue that in a way, the EU is a sum total of its parts. Most if not all European states have witnessed throughout the 1980s "a major change in the dominant macro-economic paradigm from Keynesianism to monetarism and neo-liberalism, from *dirigisme* (explicitly or gently disguised) to market-driven solutions, from fiscal expansionism to restraint, from mercantilism to free trade". This represents a paradigm shift which has led to the questioning of the role of the state, to an advocacy of policies rooted in individual choice, to market-driven competition, targeting and private initiative, and such a change should be considered the result of a multitude of elements interacting with the other in persistent and complex ways (Muller & Wright, 1994, p. 2).[4] One important source of such pressure has been the European Community itself, and in this way and in others therefore, the EU is more than simply a reflection of ideologies and policies dominant in its member states. This is worth exploring further.

In the generation of such a paradigm shift in the European Community most specifically, capitalists have made their presence felt, and to a large degree have successfully set the agenda. Ramsay (1992, p. 25) for instance, refers to the extraordinary influence wielded by the Round Table of European Industrialists – made up of 12 major companies operating chiefly in the information technology area – in the lobbying for "European market integration to be completed as a prerequisite for the formation of Euro-companies capable of meeting the challenge from abroad". "The fact", notes Ramsay, "that this group include[s] many of the largest, most successful and most influential companies in the region signal[s] the coincidence of the Commission's strategy and the interests of international capital with a European base" (p. 25).

In such a scenario, Labour movement objectives such as the preservation of jobs, for instance, can hardly be fulfilled. As Ross (1992, p. 56) notes, Europe has seen a severe weakening of labour due to rising unemployment and capital's restructuring efforts. Indeed, from the point of view of some of the representatives of the social democratic left in Europe, there is a fear that the project of a united Europe will set new limitations on the national economic-political scope for action, especially in such areas as the maintenance of a welfare state. It is also feared that the project will change the relative strength of capital and labour in favour of the former, and will lead to a downward spiralling of wages and social standards as different EC member states attempt to provide the most attractive packages for mobile capital

(Christiansen, 1992, pp. 99-100; Haahr, 1992, pp. 79 and 80). The European Trade Union Council, for instance, expressed its concern that the harmonisation of workers' rights in the EC's social contract will take place according to the principle of the lowest common denominator (ETUC conference, May 1988, cited in Haahr, 1992, p. 91). The internationalization of capital and the advent of huge transnational corporations suggests that trade unions will follow suit, and will have to organize and negotiate collective agreements internationally (Christiansen, 1992; Sultana, 1994).[5] However, there are many who fear that the labour market in southern Europe and Britain is insufficiently well-organised to make these agreements possible, and such organizational weakness "will undermine the demands for international agreements; it will therefore be very easy for the international corporations to play the national unions off against each other" (Christiansen, 1992, p. 99).[6]

British readers will perhaps query this interpretation of the effect of the EU on the socio-political field generally, and might be more positively disposed to the more progressive models of social welfare and industrial relations regimes on the continent. They might still remember Thatcher lambasting Delors' attempt to carve out a 'social space' to complement the common economic space and to strengthen the social dimension of the internal market through the promulgation of the Community Charter of the Fundamental Social Rights of Workers – the 'Social Charter'. While the reasoning behind this charter is pretty utilitarian – social cohesion and good industrial relations are more likely to facilitate economic growth in a single market than social unrest and bad industrial relations, and hence unions are to be considered as necessary social partners – Thatcher then considered that the values which informed the Social Charter were those of "Marx and the class struggle" (Palmer, 1989, p. 51, cited in Bryant, 1991, p. 97). For the Britons, then, the EU's social policies might be in advance of what is currently promoted by the Conservative Party. But it must be remembered that the Danish first said 'No' to Maastricht for precisely the opposite reasons, i.e. because they feared the loss of the social partnership and other fundamental democratic values (Christiansen, 1992, pp. 100-101). The Danish opposition, together with the Left in other European countries, is loathe to embark on the paradigm shift outlined earlier, a shift which signifies the giving up of a number of inter-related projects including the construction and management of the welfare state, the redistribution of income and the implementation of Keynesian policies of demand support and full employment, and deepening of the strength and bargaining power of trade unions, and increasing the efficiency of the regulatory function of the national state (Magri, 1991, p. 8).[7]

Concerns about the coincidence of the Commission's agendas and the interests of international capital with a European base are heightened given the political context in which these are taking place. I am here alluding to what is euphemistically referred to as the EU's 'democratic deficit', a situation which partly explains the current emphasis in the Community on developing a

'Citizens' Europe' – to be promoted, among other ways, through an intensification of a 'European dimension' in and through school curricula. It is a known fact that 'ordinary citizens' have not identified much with the unification process or ideal. Many feel that the bureaucracy in Brussels is too far away and in any case is not susceptible to the claims of popular movements, since political decisions have been transferred to sites sheltered from popular sovereignty. "The conception of democracy nourished in the corridors of EC institutions leaves no room for such participation and accountability" (Christiansen, 1992, p. 101), especially since parliamentary-democratic representation in the process of European unification is completely excluded (Magri, 1991, p. 16), and national politicians who form the Councils of Ministers refuse to account to the European Parliament, and refuse to allow the Parliament to become the legislative body for the Community and the controller of its budget. The charge of 'deficit' has also been levelled at the Commission itself (Page & Wouters, 1994). Streeck & Schmitter's (1991, p. 152) conclusion to their analysis of the 'democratic deficit' in the new Europe is instructive, and indicates clearly that the underlying agenda that gives 'unity' to a diverse Europe is highly problematic. They conclude that:

whatever will occupy the place of the supranational Single European State governing the Single European Market will likely resemble a pre-New Deal liberal state, with, in Marshall's terms: a high level of civil rights, a low level of political rights, and an even lower level of social rights, with an almost complete absence of a European system of industrial citizenship.

There might not be any easy answers to the thorny question: *Who stands to gain and who to lose under this new regime?*, for, as Bryant (1991, p. 201) points out, the terrains of the different nation-states on which EU directives and policies are applied are quite diverse. Some, like countries of the South enjoying regional re-structuring funds, might benefit in the short and perhaps even medium-term, but the underlying mechanism driving these processes remains that of capital. And while the "costs of non-Europe" (Cecchini, 1988) in economic terms should be carefully considered, there is no reason to believe that the motives which led countries of the North to successfully, and without regard for the consequences, to export the crisis to the Third World "so that their own economic stabilization was paid for through the absolute pauperization of the other, 'third' countries" (Balibar, 1991, pp. 8-9), should in any way be different in the long term. Rather, what we have are, in Sivanandan's (1989) telling phrase, "new circuits of imperialism", with capital re-organising itself in order to ensure its continued economic, political and cultural domination (Foley, 1994).

... and Education

This capital nexus that I am arguing underpins the union of Europe filters through and into the field of education, and it is therefore important to consider what the consequences of this might be to the general project we refer to as 'education'. This task is even more important to engage with because, as I have argued at the outset, it is being ignored. There is a general level of awareness of various first generation EU programmes in education, namely ERASMUS, LINGUA, PETRA, COMETT, FORCE and EUROTECNET,[8] all of which have recently been rationalised and collapsed under two umbrella projects, namely SOCRATES and LEONARDO. But most consider these to be peripheral to the European project,[9] and in any case, the general understanding is that the EU's concern is almost exclusively with vocational training at the post-secondary level. Landmark documents that have facilitated the development of the European Community refer to vocational training when they concern themselves with education. The Treaty of Rome and the Single European Act, for instance, stress that the key object of education is to strengthen the scientific and technological basis of European industry and to facilitate its international competitiveness (Act VI, art. 24). The Treaty of Maastricht re-affirms the Community's commitment to the establishment of equivalence between certification, in order to facilitate the provision of mobile human resources for capital. Article 126 para. 2 of the Treaty, for instance, formally encourages linkages between industry and education and training systems.

While I will be arguing later on that the Commission's interest has moved beyond vocational training to other aspects of education at all levels of the school system, it is important at this stage to continue with our analysis of how capital plays a leading role in determining the EU's agenda, this time in the field of education. This analysis also picks up the point made earlier, namely that the EU's influence has a supranational reach and quality, and argues that this influence extends to such sensitive areas as schooling and education, which are seen to have a powerful role to play in the promotion of European unity. In the following sections I will therefore first explore the reasons for the EU's involvement in education before moving on to an analysis of how the EU exerts its influence, and the implications all this has for pluralism, values and curriculum change.

While we must be sensitive to the complex ways in which different agendas intertwine and effect each other, we must also not lose sight of the fundamental significance of education for the European Union as a supranational body. The discourse that is coming through from Brussels emphasises a technocratic understanding of education (Sultana, 1994) based on an understanding that "there is a causal relationship between the quality and level of ... education and training provision and the efficiency of the economy" (Lowe, 1992, p. 582). As Husen and his colleagues note (1992,

p. 7), reporting on the key trends emerging in schooling in modern European society, there is the assumption that "the high economic performance of the Asian 'Dragons' may be explained, at least in part, as an outcome of an efficient school system". The corollary to this, for many governments in Western Europe comparing themselves with Japan, is that "underinvestment in skill formation and low school performance in particular, may be factors of importance in an explanation of unfavourable economic performance". Since the perception is that "in industrial manufacturing generally, the countries of the Pacific Rim as a whole may eventually outstrip Europe in competitiveness", then it follows "that this is a material challenge that education in Europe may have to meet" (Husen et al, 1992, p. 7).

We note a convergence here, with a vocationalist agenda being promoted in response to perceived economic challenges. At one level, this is not that different from what is happening outside Europe and in North America, Australia and New Zealand more specifically. Despite differences between countries, the emerging global economy virtually demands that nations address similar educational issues (Guthrie & Pierce, 1990). The formation of a multinational, interdependent network economy has led to a situation where governments, used to a state of affairs where decisions were almost exclusively based on domestic political considerations, are now realising that "trade balances, monetary regulation, interest rates, capital flows, productivity enhancement, economic growth, employment levels, and living standards are ... internationally linked" (Guthrie & Pierce, 1990, p. 180). In this situation of economic competition and commercial co-operation in a context of depressed markets, most industrialised nations face a similar set of policy problems which ultimately affect the general approach to the question of education. Among these problems are the challenge of enhancing economic productivity, the induction of scientific inventions and technology transfer, the upgrading of work force capability, the overcoming of bureaucratic inertia, the change of public attitudes and habits, and the balancing of competing claims for national resources (Guthrie & Pierce, 1990).

The EU is facilitating a convergence of policy-making in response to these challenges, and at the same time actively promoting a human resource development approach to boost the competitiveness of Europe's business. It is reinforcing tendencies already existing in Member States (Leclercq & Rault, 1990, p. 121), and extending them deeper and further. In this regard, the Commission has declared its intention to "place education and training at the forefront of its priorities to spearhead a new Community-wide commitment to invest in people" (Commission of the European Communities, 1989, p. 1). This understanding of economic needs shapes expectations and projects for education, even though there is ample evidence to back up labour market segmentation theory, which, in contrast to human capital theory, proposes that "productivity is an attribute of jobs, not of people", and that "people are matched to jobs by criteria which may be associated with education, but

education is not a determinant of productivity" (Jamieson's 1989, p. 70; Murphy, 1993). Future economic growth is considered to depend heavily on the establishment of an effective international orientation to business firms, an orientation reliant to a great extent upon the international knowledge and orientation of employees. It follows then that education must prepare the young to understand other cultures and to learn at least one other European language. Since innovatory technology is believed to be today's pot of gold, then national curricula must specify an increased focus on mathematics, science and technology. Since hi-technology industries require a highly skilled worker, then the student must be considered as a human resource to be developed in line with economic profiles, and to be moulded into the flexible, adaptable worker required by industry (Commission of the European Communities, 1993, pp. 3, 4-5 and passim).

It is crucial to the arguments set out in this paper to acknowledge the organizational capacity of capital to channel the general educational agenda in Europe into a technocratic mould. The EU Commissioner in charge of education and training programmes, Antonio Ruberti, admitted that European companies were making urgent demands on him (Ruberti, 1994, p. 1), and it is clear that European industrialists are not only lobbying governments of individual nation states, but also the EU, a strategy which they are clearly finding more appropriate given the needs of international capital. The Round Table of European Industrialists, for instance, has exerted pressure on the EU in an attempt to promote harmonisation between education systems:

... the situation today is not related to the requirements of nationhood or basic industrial needs. In a unifying Europe with a free labour market and transferability and compatibility of skills the requirements on the educational system are different. Today similarities are sought, not differences. The concept of strong nationalism has been taken over by Europeanism. Diversity and separate identity should be overcome and exchanged for educational systems which are mutually strengthening and supportive. (Kairamo, 1990, p. 16, quoted in Funnell & Muller, 1991, p. 66)

Clearly we have here pressure on the EU to bring about convergence in European education systems in the project of the formation and reproduction of labour power that is responsive to new economic needs (Jones, 1991, pp. 6-7; IRDAC, n.d.). At this stage, however, it is legitimate to ask the extent to which the European Community is in fact exerting supranational leadership in education. For one could of course argue that the EU's official influence in the field of education is highly circumscribed. The EU, for instance, does not have "the power to prescribe a unified education policy to member states ... the European Committee of Ministers can only pass general guidelines and recommendations, hoping that the member states will bear the EC directives in mind when passing their legislation" (Rohrs, 1992, p. 63). How influential,

then, is the EU in education, and which mechanisms are used to exert that influence?

How Influential is the EU in Education?

While the unification effort is mainly concerned with trade and economic issues, there is a tendency that "however narrowly defined initially ... [these issues] ultimately connect to a wide range of other matters and initiate a snowball effect towards greater supranationality" (Ross, 1992, p. 51).[10] That is, an intensification of the dynamics of unification requires mechanisms and structures supportive of that process. In the previous section the focus remained on vocational education, but increasingly the latter has been understood in very broad terms to include general education, and both have featured higher and higher on the priorities of the EU as its awareness of the need to create a 'People's Europe' has grown deeper. Jean Monnet's cryptic statement with reference to his attempts at getting the EEC going, claiming "If I had to do it again, I would start with education", is frequently cited in this regard, and Milner (1993, p. 42), noting the widening brief that the Task Force for Human Resources, Training, Education and Youth (now reorganised under the auspices of DGXII) has adopted, argues that "education and training is set to become a major policy area in the near future, whilst retaining its discourse of subsidiarity".

There are many signs of the Commission's shift in this direction. Investment in SOCRATES for 1995-99 stands at Ecu 1 billion, which represents an increase of 40% over the previous budget allocation to the programmes it replaced. Another 800 million ecus have been earmarked for LEONARDO, which means a doubling of the funds for vocational training (Pochet et al, 1994, p. 232). Articles 126 and 127 of the Maastricht Treaty provide the EU with a much wider explicit mandate and solid base for its education and training action (Ruberti, 1994, p. 1), extending its influence to the most sensitive area of schooling, compulsory education, and to what should be taught in schools (Barnard, 1992). This mandate was confirmed by a number of significant events. At the European Council in Brussels in December 1993, Heads of State and Government approved the Commission's White Paper on growth, competitiveness and employment, in which not only training but education as well play a key role. The year 1993 also saw the publication of an influential consultation document, the *Green Paper on the European Dimension of Education* (Commission of the European Communities, 1993) which, while engaging the usual theme of human resource development (para. 20, p. 7), goes far beyond that to promote European union through curricula at all levels. In this regard, the European Court has given, since the 1970s, "consistently broad interpretation to the legislative powers of the Community" (Shaw, 1991, p. 15). 'Vocational training', that area of education where the Commission has been most active, has been considered to "include almost all post-secondary education, with the

exception of courses pursued for general scholarly interest" (Shaw, 1991, p. 13).

Experts in the international law of education have been among the first to note that the European Court has been "responsible for dramatically altering the face of European education law" (Barnard, 1992, p. 123). These lawyers (Flynn, 1988; Lonbay, 1989; Shaw, 1991; Barnard, 1992; Houghton-James, 1993) note that up to 1992, simple majority sufficed in Council's deliberation on education matters, and hence it was very difficult for recalcitrant Member States to block a particular initiative without the substantial support of several other Member States. With Maastricht, qualified majority voting has been introduced, so that it is now easier for a Member state to block a particular measure. However, this was a concession the Commission was obliged to make given the wider remit on education given by the Treaty (Barnard, 1992, p. 128). In addition to this, a number of benchmark European Court cases gave the Commission and the Council "almost *carte blanche* to legislate on the basis of Article 128" (Barnard, 1992, p. 125), which ensures that "in so far as national competence and sovereignty hinder the achievement of Community objectives, in particular the creation of a single market, Community law will intervene" (Shaw, 1991, p. 2). Not only has the number of interventions in the field of education on the part of the Commission of the European Communities increased, but the quality of these interventions has changed. Educational lawyers have noted an important shift in Community action that deserves to be underlined. Thus, since 1963 such action in education took place at an intergovernmental level and largely resulted in 'soft law' in the form of non-legally binding Resolutions or Conclusions of the Council and Ministers of Education meeting within the Council. Since the mid 1980s, however, there has been a shift to 'hard law', that is autonomous and enforceable Community action in the contribution of education to positive integration (Lonbay, 1989; Shaw, 1991; Barnard, 1992).

Of course, the powers of the UE in the field of education are circumscribed, and a number of member states, not least among them the United Kingdom, have vigorously opposed any encroachment into what is considered to be an area of national competence (Earl, 1991, p. 50; Barnard, 1992, pp. 123-124). There is general agreement that there is little chance that Europe's education systems will unite, not only because of the nationalistic origin and orientation of such systems in the different Member States (Andrieu, 1992, p. 143; Rust, 1992, p. 38; Ryba, 1992, pp. 6-7). In addition, the Maastricht Treaty cautiously declares that the position of the Community is very much subordinate and supplementary in relationship to Member States, and there is a clear delimitation of roles, so that the Community may not interfere with the detailed organisation or content of education. It also needs to be pointed out that where the Community takes the lead by legislating to bring about educational change, it imposes "obligations of co-operation and not of action on the Member States", and it cannot organise

educational provision, harmonise educational rights or directly prescribe syllabus content (Shaw, 1991, p. 15).

But it is not only through formal legal means that the EU succeeds in influencing the educational agenda, and my argument is that the Commission's activities do in fact bring about a convergence in practice. My conclusion is that indirectly rather more than directly, the EU, while having no supra-national authority, is wielding considerable influence and giving shape and direction to education developments, and effectively acting as a catalyst for change.[11] There might be few official regulations, directives and decisions [12] in matters educational, but the non-legally binding resolutions and recommendations have, nevertheless, been effective in establishing and extending the Commission's influence. Incentive measures are used effectively by the Commission to foster 'positive integration' through education, and "the carrot of additional funding targeted directly at educational establishments and students" through such means as positive financial stimuli for students to study abroad, for institutions to teach European studies and foreign languages, and for the promotion of exchange of young workers and educationalists (Shaw, 1991, pp. 2-3) could be as effective as legislation, and certainly evoke less resistance by countries jealously guarding their autonomy. "What Member State want to miss out?", asks Barnard (1992, p. 124) rhetorically.

Other mechanisms by means of which influence is ensured can be mentioned briefly in this context. A highly sophisticated network of information about education systems and policies has been set up in the European Community, with the view of "developing exchanges of information and experience on issues common to the education systems of the Member States" (Treaty of Maastricht, Chapter 3, Article A, para. 2). This has fanned hopes of utilising educational Europe as a "rich thesaurus of case studies, ready for exploitation" (Bruce, 1991, p. 170). While the Community emphasises the autonomy of member states in most matters related to education, increasingly European ministers of education meet to discuss the same situations and preoccupations, aim at the same goals, follow similar directions, and adopt similar policies (Leclercq & Rault, 1989, p. 147; Bouchez & de Peretti, 1990; Vonk, 1991; Ryba, 1994). In this situation, various European international organisations have exerted an influence, but there is little doubt that the EU is "by far the strongest and most interventionist" (Ryba, 1994, p. 1).

A kind of synergy has been created whereby financial and prestige incentives attract governments, researchers, education associations and societies, and educators at all levels to focus on European themes at international meetings, in setting up research projects, and in devising courses with a European dimension at the compulsory school level and beyond. Many educators have latched on to the discourse of Europe and are developing their own pedagogical projects to feed into the process of unification. Educators – not unaffected by the new opportunities for career trajectories that the

European Union represents – have collaborated in the creation of European school links, cross-national data bases, educational action programmes (in such fields as foreign language teaching, technology transfer, and student and teacher mobility), and in facilitating innovations in order to develop a 'European dimension' in and across curricula. They have also busily set up 'European' associations and networks, organised international meetings, and published textbooks and special issues of journals for all those who are engaged, in one way or another, with educational activities.[13] Things European have, to use a Foucauldian phrase, become 'inscribed' in educational discourse, and this, as much – and perhaps more than – legal means, consolidates EU influence and processes of convergence.

This European dimension in education constitutes the focus of the last section of my paper, and helps to bridge the emphasis on the role of capital in the EU that I have outlined above with the dangers of not only Euro-centrism but also Euro-racism that I will discuss below. For capital, the agenda for European unity, and racism are inextricably linked, as Balibar (1991) has so carefully argued in his analysis of politics in contemporary Europe. It is to be consideration of the role of education in these developments that we now turn.

Euro-centrism and the Curriculum

I would like to start this section by juxtaposing two quotations about Europe:

Europeanism in the spirit of a 'homo europaeus' is based squarely on the primacy of the rational – a rationality achieved against the background of cultural diversity and affording continuity on the historical plane and a touchstone both in the artistic-aesthetic dimension and the world of the sciences. At the intellectual level, a European is basically a product of the Enlightenment, while at the same time in no way jettisoning religious faith. (Rohrs, 1992, p. 62)

Leave this Europe where they are never done talking of Man, yet murder men everywhere they find them, at the corner of every one of their own streets, in all the corners of the globe. For centuries they have stifled almost the whole of humanity in the name of a so-called spiritual experience ... today we know with what sufferings humanity has paid for every one of their triumphs of the mind. Come then, comrades, the European game has finally ended; we must find something different. We today can do everything, so long as we do not imitate Europe, so long as we are not obsessed by the desire to catch up with Europe. (Fanon, 1968, pp. 311, 312)

These two quotations capture nicely the contending about Europe that necessarily need to emerge if we are to do justice to the increasingly pervasive and hegemonic themes appearing under the aegis of the 'European dimension in education'.

The first quotation is symptomatic of the rhetorical construction of Europe, which, as the French sociologist Morin (1987, p. 23) would point out, "provokes unreal, mixed up or imaginary Europes", and is associated with a view of Europe as having a "historic mission of progress" (Ruberti, 1991, p. 209). Europe, adds Morin, is misconstrued "by all that simplifies it, with idealization, abstraction or reduction". It is complex, plural, and hence it is at once a nurturer and a destroyer, capable of fitting the narrative of rationality, but also of terror.[14] As Said (1992, p. xxix) puts it "Partly because of empire, all cultures are involved in one another; none is single, pure, all are hybrid, heterogenous, extraordinarily differentiated, and unmonolithic". The very geographic definition of 'Europe' is contested and contestable (Mallinson, 1980), with many authors being incapable of including Central and Eastern Europe in their accounts of what constitutes 'European education', compared, for example, with the broad definition of the European region by UNESCO, which includes North America and Israel, a definition which coincides with that adopted by the Confederation on Security and Cooperation in Europe (Rissom, 1992, p. 701).

There is another side to this 'multiplicity of Europes', even within the 'little Europe' that constitutes the EU. I am of course here referring to the populations from Anatolia, Asia, Africa and Latin and Caribbean America who settled in the cities of the EU in the period of economic expansion which followed 1945. To these must be added those people involved in the massive inter-European migration from the South and the East to the cities of the North, the "Mediterranean Europe taken by force to the North" as Moretti (1994, p. 108) refers to them, [15] the itinerant population of gypsies and travellers with their unrecognised and misunderstood cultures. Coulby (1994, p. 8) is worth quoting at length here:

There are nearly two hundred languages spoken by children in the schools of London. Islam is a major religious and communal force in Frankfurt and Berlin. These populations have often migrated to the metropolitan centres of the previously colonising (politically and/or economically) power: Surinamese and Moluccans to Amsterdam, Maghrebins to Paris and Marseilles, West Indians and people from the subcontinent of India to London and Birmingham, Turks and Stuttgart and Munich, Chilean refugees to Madrid and now Ethiopians and Maghrebins to Naples and Milan ... The impact of these populations on the cultural and educational map of the EU is profound. Their presence, especially in the large cities of the Union, is a further exposure of the absurdity of a unitary national or pan-European culture.

It is important to hold these critiques up against the promotion of a European Dimension in and across curricula in EU member states. By a 'European dimension' I am referring to the curricular and extra-curricular modes by which schools at all levels are being encouraged to inculcate in students not only information and knowledge about the European Union, but also an emotional identification with Europe, that is it is not just a question of

learning about Europe, but learning to be European (Neave, 1984; Rust, 1992, p. 38; Ryba, 1992, 1994; Palomba, 1993), a familiarisation with European institutions, but also the inculcation of a European identity, conscience and citizenry (Leclercq & Rault, 1990, pp. 138-139). The intention is not to develop a supra-national common European curriculum, but rather, as in the case of the United Kingdom (Luchtenberg, 1994) to have a transversal theme added to the national curriculum (Ryba, 1994, p. 2). It is a response to "the need to help young people in European countries to understand the new situation in which they are increasingly finding themselves, to know something of the new rights and responsibilities which this new situation brings and to develop their capacities to act sensibly, if they should wish to do so, within this additional, rather than alternative, European context" (Ryba, 1994, p. 3).

Responding to critiques regarding the EU's democratic deficit, Delors is quoted as saying that "A union among the people of Europe can only be achieved if its citizens understand something of the political, social and cultural life in the other Member States" (cited in Barnard, 1992, p. 124). Lonbay (1989) has identified three ways through which, given the officially peripheral competence that the EU has in the educational sphere, education can be used to promote this 'European dimension'. This is through the establishment of Community schools, the granting of access to educational provision across member states, and the 'communitisation' of the curriculum. The latter strategy has been intensified, especially following the influential Vanbergen Report (1988) which argued for a systematic insertion of opportunities in the curriculum to discuss questions relating to ethical, political and social choices involved in European integration (Mulcahy, 1992, pp. 197-188). The Resolution by the Council of Minister passed soon after (*Official Journal of the European Communities*, 1988) proposed a set of objectives to strengthen the European Dimension, with each resolution reflecting the values outlined by Vanbergen. Most recently we note the formal ratification of this strategy with the appearance of the theme in the Treaty of Maastricht, which basically responds to the question: "How can we go faster and further?" (Bell, 1991, p. 6).

And there is some evidence that inroads into the curriculum are being affected, even though a distinction needs to be drawn between what countries say they are doing, and what they are in fact achieving with regards to the promotion of a European dimension (Heater, 1992, pp. 59-61; Ryba, 1992). Curricular subjects most often affected are languages, social studies, geography, history, with some schools introducing European studies as a discrete component on the syllabus, and there is a growing literature reporting on how the European Dimension has been incorporated both in member states (Vaniscotte, 1989b) such as Germany (Luchtenberg, 1994), Ireland (Mulcahy, 1992), Spain (Peck, 1992; Pereyra, 1993) and the United Kingdom (Bell, 1991), and those countries aspiring for membership, such as the Netherlands and there are several projects organised in primary,

secondary and post-secondary schools and universities within and between member states which promote a European dimension, which encourage exchange of students and the use of email (Heater, 1992) and satellite television (Austin, 1992) communication, and which develop curricula materials, including games (Trybus, 1988), in order to ensure that students become Europeanised. We have curricular models based on learning objectives in the areas of 'knowledge', 'attitudes' and 'skills' in order to inculcate European citizenship (Bell, 1991b, p. 20; Heater, 1992, p. 55). Examples of 'good' practice are diffused through a variety of means (Hart, 1992), and teacher education programmes are increasingly pushing a European dimension agenda in their courses, as is witnessed by ATEE newsletter issues (e.g. *ATEE News* 37/38/39, September 1992, December 1992, March 1993).

While it might be true that the nationalist foundation of European school systems is still very strong (Ryba, 1994, p. 2), [16] that curricular initiatives have tended to highlight information about "organizational, legal, and policy agreements rather than emotional elements related to being European" (Rust, 1992, p. 38), and the extent of the spread of curricular innovation is generally limited (Earl, 1991), [17] it would be wrong to think that these changes are not significant. The move towards an overarching, Pan-European dimension is gathering momentum as individuals, voluntary associations, public authorities at national and regional levels, and international organizations contribute their resources (Ryba, 1994, p. 4), and it is especially important to note that the Council of Europe has become one of the key actors in the diffusion of these innovations. [18] There is increasingly an "acceptance of the idea that social and cultural institutions of member states should mirror European Community economic interdependence, acceptance of cross-national curriculum reform aimed at changing values, acceptance of Community leadership in preparing for attitudinal change, and acceptance of a vision of the future in which the minds and hearts of a new generation will be shaped by a European frame of reference" (Swing & Orivel, 1992, p. 4). As Coulby (1994, p. 4) notes, "there is a political reason for the EU being prepared to spend such generous sums on [Europeanisation]. The more the children of Europe learn with a Europeanised curriculum, the more they are likely to grow up to endorse European Union and the political and bureaucratic institutions which support it ... The Europeanisation of the school and university curricula is a political intervention on the culture of the continent".

... Progressive Potential?

Many Euro-enthusiastic educationalists are hitching their theorising and research (not to mention careers) to the EU band-wagon, proclaiming – rather too uncritically – the virtues of the union. 'Euro-educationists' will point out the generally progressive tenor of the European Commission's activity in the

field of education, marked as this is by a concern with higher achievement levels in education. Such a concern has led to the development of action programmes geared at the better integration of children of migrants (in 1977), of gypsies and circus performers (in 1989), and of students with handicaps and with special learning needs in schools (in 1985). Action programmes such as these, it could be argued, have not only been effective in raising consciousness about the plight of hitherto marginalised and at-risk students, but in some cases have led governments to adopt progressive educational practices that they would not have normally considered. A case in point would be Directive 77/486/EEC (Articles 2 and 3), which imposes an obligation on the authorities of member states of the EU to provide children of migrant workers not only with intensive tuition in an official language, but also to promote the teaching of the mother tongue and the culture of the country of origin of the child (Barnard, 1992, p. 126).

Other progressive action programmes have aimed at the better representation of female students in scientific and technical courses (in 1985). Generally speaking, most of the activities of the Commission of the European Communities have contributed to the fight against school failure, and have placed a premium on the development of effective pedagogies on the part of teachers, to attract, retain and facilitate the success of students in schools (Vaniscotte, 1989a,b; Leclercq & Rault, 1990, p. 121; Gretler, 1991/2). Some educators have pointed out to the similarities between multicultural education and the promotion of a European dimension in education (Garrido, 1991/2; Ludttenberg, 1994, p. 7), which also has mutual understanding as a goal, though this is understanding is addressed rather too narrowly at western culture. The emphasis on the learning of other European languages [19] and on becoming more sensitive to the European dimension, while dangerous because of their Euro-centric focus (Clay & Cole, 1992; Chistolini, 1994; Sultana, 1995), do represent opportunities for students to live in and with diversity (Palomba, 1993), to be exposed to a process of 'tertiary socialisation', where learners "know and experience that, from other people's point of view, *they* are the 'foreigners', *their* mode of thinking and acting seems unnatural" (Byram, 1992, p. 12). As Coulby (1994, pp. 11-12) has argued, "Against the National Curriculum of England and Wales or the language obsessions of the current French government, the European theme [is] a breath of fresh air. At least through Europeanisation some sense of a wider international community, a richer and less certain history, a more heterogeneous and interactive culture may be accessed". It is noteworthy, for instance, that one of *Lingua's* predispositions is to privilege minority languages, such as Danish and Portuguese, rather than English, French or German in its recommendations for foreign language learning in member states (Earl, 1991). Largely due to the promotion of the European Dimension in/across the curriculum, national education systems have to confront, to a degree, the national bias in their texts and curricula.

A number of educators have, moreover, intercepted the discourse on European identity to define education on the continent in terms of progressive values that are purported to be characteristically European. Some of the efforts of these educators have been particularly influential. One could here mention the Vanbergen Report (Commission of the European Communities, 1988) as well as analyses carried out in different countries of the European Union which identify the essential elements of a European education, what Ryba (1994, p. 10) refers to as "what is best about Europe". Such elements would include a respect for democracy, human rights, freedom and cultural pluralism; acceptance of a common cultural heritage and a world order supporting the development of mankind; a recognition that the European cultural model is not intended to supersede existing national cultures but to respect their diversity (Heater, 1992; Luchtenberg, 1994); and increased co-operation and dialogue between the countries of the Union and of the world (Mulcahy, 1992). The focus of a European-inspired education would be "democracy as a political-cum-pedagogical parameter for a life lived in freedom" (Rohrs, 1992, p. 61).

... A Divisive Education?

There are, of course, a number of issues one could raise here. In another context I have examined in detail how these initiatives, and the activity of the EU as a supranational actor in the field of education generally, are negatively influencing the very conception of what education is, and in particular, are leading to a re-conceptualisation of teachers' work (Sultana, 1994). I have argued with others that teachers might be considered, in the present European climate, as change agents, but only on the Commission's own terms (Mitter, 1991, p. 143), acting as technicians inserting and implementing curriculum packages and agendas set by Brussels (Palomba, 1993, p. 9) rather than engaging in self-determined activities at the grass roots.[20] In this paper, I will focus on another theme, more closely related to the focus on pluralism and values in this volume, and therefore on an examination of the promotion of a pan-European education which resonates with Fanon's (1968) condemnation of Europe and its story of pillage and destruction. Said's work is very useful here, especially when he urges us to engage in a contrapuntal reading of the construction of Europe, since the present fabrication marginalizes "all the non-European essence, whose inhabitants, societies, histories, and beings represent a non-European regions, are made subservient to Europe, which in turn demonstrably continues to control what is not Europe, and represents the non-European in such a way as to sustain control" (Said, 1991, p. 127).

The fact of the matter is that the economic interests of a uniting Europe are creating centripetal forces of Europeanisation "pulling culture and knowledge towards the metropolitan centre", and this lies in direct conflict with "the centrifugal forces of local, regional and even national identities

pulling towards the preservation and reformulation of heterogeneity" (Coulby, 1994, p. 6). Balibar (1991, p. 6) does not mince words in his analysis of what he calls the "new European racism", a phenomenon which is given "added momentum by the 'construction of Europe' and sustained by an ideal image of Europe itself". Balibar goes on to argue that "discrimination is written into the very nature of the European Community, which in each country directly leads to the definition of two categories of foreigners with unequal rights. The developing EC structures – particularly if they give rise to thorny issues of individual movements, frontier controls, social rights, and so on – can only sharpen this trend and make the 'difference' between Community 'insiders' and 'outsiders' as such a locus of overt or latent conflict. The fact that, in Europe as a whole, a large proportion of 'Blacks' or 'immigrants' are not foreigners in the eyes of law merely intensifies the contradictions, and intersects with the ever more pressing question of European identity". Other critics have noted the extent to which the growth of a 'Fortress Europe' is increasing – indeed 'harmonising' the control strategies over immigrant workers (Webber, 1989; Allen & Macey, 1990).

In the attempt to identify what Europe is, that is in the attempt to establish identity through difference, there is a very real danger of peripheralising countries, belief systems, languages, rendering invisible the histories and concerns of the politically and economically weak regions. Or, to put it very succinctly, learning 'for Europe' carries with it an implication of learning 'against others' (Gebauer, cited in Luchtenberg, 1994, p. 9), and these 'others' are both outside the little Europe and inside it. An analysis of directives on the European dimension shows in fact that these seldom refer to non-European aspects, and the unproblematised referent is a "Christian, middle European world view" (Luchtenberg, 1994, p. 9). Some educators consider that the EU has derailed curricular development away from "international education" dimension towards a narrower 'European education' dimension. In this context, Chistolini (1994, p. 5) asks: "If even education discusses solely in terms of European perspectives how would it be possible to live together with people from other continents avoiding the highly criticized assimilation, which implies renewed processes of Europeanization?" Chistolini, reflecting themes developed so forcefully by Said (1993), and building on the incontrovertible realities of international migration, argues that Europe is faced with two alternatives in reaction to the breakdown of any cultural unity that might have existed. The first is to constantly affirm that Europe has its own cultural identity without negating the presence of ethnic variety. She notes that it has been "a strategy of this continent to legitimize the difference of national and regional cultures within a common heritage symbolized by human products of arts and sciences" (Chistolini, 1994, p. 5), and points out to the chapter on education in the Maastricht Treaty which adopts precisely this same strategy. In opposition to this, Chistolini presents a second alternative, broader in scope than the first one, namely "to consider unreal any

project for European unity unable to confront itself with the whole meaning of that 'unity' which substantially includes the whole world".

For ultimately, Said (1992, pp. 62, 63) is so sensibly correct when he argues, with reference to Eurocentric and other forms of essentializations which thrive on oppositions, where "Greeks always require barbarians, and Europeans Africans, Orientals, etcetera", that:

One need only think of the tremendously powerful upheavals that occurred at the end of the 1980s – the breaking down of barriers, the popular insurgencies, the drift across borders, the looming problems of immigrant, refugee, and minority rights in the West – to see how obsolete are the old categories, the tight separations, and the comfortable autonomies.

Conclusion

Throughout this paper I have argued that the current construction of Europe poses a threat to the education project of the future for those of us on the democratic left. I have argued that as educators, we need to carefully consider this construction, its dynamics and agendas, as well as the driving force behind it and whose interests it serves. I have made a case for the recognition of the EU as a supranational actor which is more than just the sum of policies pursued independently in its member states, and have provided some evidence to alert us to the influence of international capital with a European base in the development of the EU agenda for education. Activity in the promotion of this agenda has become intensified over the past decade, and it is important for us to be equally proactive in understanding and contesting the current trends.

One way of doing this is, to use Said's words (1993, p. 260 and *passim*), to "write back" to the metropolitan cultures, to disrupt the European narratives, to vigorously contest any essentialist nationalism by continuously pointing out that "the history of all cultures is the history of cultural borrowings". In a new age characterised by economic and socio-political dislocations and configurations, and at the same time by human interdependence on a world scale:

a new critical consciousness is needed, and this can be achieved only by revised attitudes to education. Merely to urge students to insist on one's own identity, history, tradition, uniqueness may initially get them to name their basic requirements for democracy and for the right to an assured, decently humane existence. But we need to go on and to situate these in a geography of other identities, peoples, cultures, and then to study how, despite their differences, they have always overlapped one another, through unhierarchical influence, crossing, incorporation, recollection, deliberate forgetfulness, and, of course, conflict ... The fact is, we are mixed in with one another in ways that most national systems of education have not dreamed of. To match knowledge in

the arts and sciences with these integrative realities is, I believe, the intellectual and cultural challenge of (the) moment. (Said, 1993, p. 401)

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Notes

- [1] A salutary counter-discourse, while rare, can be found in the writings of authors such as Pieterse (1991), Heller (1994), Keane (1994) and Papcke (1994).
- [2] Deregulation in one respect has often generated reregulation in another, and market protection has induced increased state activity, as have external influences such as internationalisation, Europeanisation, multinationalisation and technological change. As Muller & Wright (1994, p. 10) point out, one can have situations where the state 'retreats' from some sectors in an external sense, while concurrently reinforcing the role of the state internally (e.g. in financial services).
- [3] Manning (1993, p. 16) explores these questions with reference to policy making. The extent to which this is happening in the field of education should be the subject of immediate empirical inquiry, and the present author is preparing a research project to address this particular lacuna. Readers sympathetic to this reading of the EU and interested in collaborating in this cross-national project are invited to contact the author.
- [4] Muller & Wright (1994, pp. 2-3) mention budget-maximising bureaucrats in league with well entrenched (and often unrepresentative) interests, as well as pressures exercised by the international market and rapid technological change. They also suggest that the different paradigm was diffused by a host of individuals, think tanks, institutions, and international organisations such as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and the Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development.
- [5] This is the view expressed by the likes of Bottomore (1992) and other contributors to the journal *Socialism of Tomorrow*, who argue that the possibilities for socialist co-operation, and for a 'refoundation' (Magri, 1991) and 'internationalisation' (Held, 1988; Camiller, 1989) of the Left, have been enhanced through the organisational capabilities offered by institutions such as the European Union. See also the volume edited by Ulman et al (1993). Clark (1994, p. 169) quotes President Mitterand writing in 1970 that "We don't want Europe for Europe's sake, but Europe for socialism".
- [6] Similar concerns are expressed by Hoskyns (1994) in her analysis of gender issues in international relations, with reference to the establishment of agendas in the European Community.
- [7] The uncertainty as to the ultimate conservative or progressive effect of European union prevails not only in terms of general socialist aspirations, but also in terms of gender issues (cf. inter alia Kaplan, 1994) and, especially relevant to this article, in terms of racial issues (cf. the spate of articles that have appeared in recent numbers of *Race and Class*, including those by Bunyan, 1991, and Webber, 1991).
- [8] By 1994, these had involved more than 250,000 students in all (Ruberti, 1994, p. 1).
- [9] They certainly appear to be so when one considers the amount of funding that has gone into them when this is expressed as a percentage of the overall EU budget. To take just one example, the budget for the Lingua programme for all 12 EU member states amounted to one half of what the Community spends in a half a day on its agricultural policies (Earl, 1991, p. 50).

- [10] Indeed, early advocates of European integration such as Robert Schuman and Jean Monnet encouraged a 'functional incrementalism' in the Community, a strategy which is premised on the fact that:
- if sovereign states could be persuaded to co-operate with one another over a trivial technical issue (like harmonising road signs), or if they could be made to see the wisdom of pooling resources in a particular economic sector (like coal or steel), and if they agreed to let these technical, sectoral matters be managed from the centre by a semi-independent authority, then all one needed to do was gradually to build up the idea of co-operating with each other and, as time went by, one could attempt more and more ambitious projects. One day the nation state would be caught, like Gulliver, by hundreds of sovereignty stripping agreements. (Curzon Price, 1989, p. 27, cited in Bryant, 1991, p. 194).*
- Even if since 1985 there has been a pragmatic shift away from a strategy of 'harmonisation' to one of 'mutual recognition and equivalence', whereby central direction has, in theory, given way to 'federalism' (recognition of diverse national practices) and 'subsidiarity' (the taking of decisions at the lowest practical level, i.e. non-centralisation), it is still possible to identify a strong current of convergence in a number of different fields, including education.
- [11] Shaw (1991, pp. 15-16) identifies a number of discrete areas where the Community has acted as a catalyst to educational change. These include student mobility at the post-secondary level, the modernisation of the structure, organisation, and content of post-secondary education, the closer linkage of education and industry to regional development, the introduction of new technologies, and the enhancement of partnership between education and industry.
- [12] There are various means through which the Community exerts its influence. Treaty provisions form a quasi-constitutional base, and are supplemented by extensive and diverse subordinate legislation. This in turn consists of a continuum of differentially enforceable measures. Thus, 'regulations' are legislative in form, are binding in their entirety, and are directly applicable in the Member States. 'Directives' are directed towards Member States, and are 'binding as to the result to be achieved'. National authorities therefore have the choice as to the form and method of implementing Directives into national law. 'Decisions' are binding in their entirety on those to whom they are addressed, while 'resolutions' and 'opinions' have no binding force (cf. Barnard, 1992, pp. 129 ff.).
- [13] What I refer to as the 'mobilising influence' of the European Union is an important aspect of the play of power relations in this context. Instances of this mobilising power are the following: the setting up of a *European Education Research Association* (1994) and of the *European Association for Counsellors* (1994); the launching of education networks such as PLEASE and CIDREE; the publication of new magazines with a focus on European education, such as *Context* (1991) and *Le Magazine* (1994); the publication of special issues (on education in Europe) of international education journals, such as the *International Review of Education* (1992), and *Comparative Education Review* (1992); the convening of international conferences with a focus on Europe, such as the 16th *Comparative Education Societies in Europe Conference* (Copenhagen June 1994) and the *Oxford Studies in Comparative Education* meeting in January 1995. 'Centres for European Education' have been set up in each Member state, and various projects to introduce a 'European dimension' in national curricula have been implemented.
- [14] These conflicting images are more readily identified by students, it seems, than by Euro-enthusiastic academics. This emerges from a cross-national study of students replying to a survey asking "What is Europe" (Fells & Niznik, 1992).
- [15] Becchi (1992, p. 217), citing OECD sources, notes that the percentage of 'foreigners' under the age of 15 in such countries as Austria, Belgium, France and Germany hovers between 20 and 25% of the total population.
- [16] Indeed, Byram (1992, p. 11) notes that the United Kingdom's National Curriculum represents in part a centralised effort to assert national identity, and is, to some extent, a

- response to "the perceived threat to nationhood implicit in the development of a supranational or, at the very least, an international European community".
- [17] Earl (1991, p. 5) points out for instance that by 1990 only 16 secondary schools out of a total of 4000 in the United Kingdom had participated in the European Awareness Development Project.
- [18] The Council of Europe issued recommendations about the teaching of the European Dimension (Rec. No. 1111 of the Parliamentary Assembly, 1989) and dedicated 1991 to a focus on the ways in which the teaching of history could contribute to a pan-European identity. By 1992 it had developed a programme on "Language learning for European citizenship", as well as the "Secondary Education for Europe" programme (Council of Europe, 1993).
- [19] The goal is for each EU citizen to master two languages of Member States other than one's own.
- [20] Such a process is visible not only with reference to teachers, but also in other professions as well (Button & Fleming, 1992).

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